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I Have Told You of Our Will to Live Again; I Have Told You of Our Needs and Our Wounds. I Need Not Wait for Your Answer.—Andre Tardieu, France's envoy.

FEATURES WITHIN

PARIS, Nov. 8.—Describing the arrival of the German armistice envoys at the French lines, the "Intransigeant" says that the automobiles carried white flags and were preceded by a trumpeter.

Humbled on the Soil Where Her Pride Was Born

Germany, in 1871 and in 1918, and the Price She Has Paid for Her Folly

By Fred B. Pitney

NOW while Germany has been asking for an armistice it is interesting to recall her own conduct when she was the victor and defeated France sought an armistice in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-'71.

The war began on July 19, 1870, and the first battle was fought at Saarbrück on August 2. By August 14 the First German Army had advanced to the immediate neighborhood of Metz, where Marshal Bazaine commanded for France. Bazaine was defeated at Mars-la-Tour on August 16, and two days later occurred the great battle of Gravelotte, as a result of which Bazaine was shut up in Metz and remained there with his army until he surrendered, on October 27.

September 1 was the Battle of Sedan, where the Emperor, Napoleon III, was defeated and his entire army surrounded. The following day he surrendered with 83,000 men, including forty general officers, 230 staff officers, and 2,595 line officers. On the day of the battle 21,000 officers and men had been captured by the Germans.

An Upheaval Followed Sedan

When the news of Sedan reached Paris there was an immediate upheaval, and the Third Republic was proclaimed with a government of national defence, comprising Jules Favre, Crémieux, Ferry, Jules Simon and Gambetta. General Trochu, the military governor of Paris, was its head. The Germans gradually closed in on Paris, and by September 19 the capital was regularly invested. Strassburg surrendered September 28.

It was at this time that the first attempt was made by France to end the war. A peace note reached the German headquarters through a neutral source. It spoke of conciliation and magnanimity, the wisdom of not pushing things to extremes, the advantages of equitable arrangements, and the good results that might come from a removal of misunderstandings.

Bismarck and von Moltke at that time controlled German affairs. King William of Prussia was the nominal head, but Bismarck was the real ruler. He received the note with the remark:

"There's no hurry to answer that rubbish."

Bismarck and Prussian Threats

The second effort toward peace followed very quickly. The government of national defence had appointed Jules Favre and Thiers as peace delegates. Favre met Bismarck at Ferrières toward the end of September, 1870. The Iron Chancellor received the French envoy in the most haughty manner and carried on the discussions in the spirit of a conqueror come to dictate terms. Through the whole interview he displayed the arrogance of the Prussian militarists who had determined to reduce their enemy to impotence. His whole talk was based on the threat to starve Paris. Hunger was his weapon.

Later on, after this effort for peace had failed and Paris was literally starving, Bismarck said:

"If the Parisians first received a supply of provisions, and were then again put on half rations and more and more obliged to starve, that ought, I think, to work. It is like flogging. When it is administered continuously it is not felt so much. But when it is suspended for a time and then another dose inflicted, it hurts. I know that from the criminal courts, where I was employed."

"The Chancellor," according to Dr. Moritz Busch, in his "secret pages" of the history of Bismarck, "was guided by the principle that the civil population must suffer by the war in order to render them the more disposed to peace."

Busch, by his own account, had "official and private intercourse with the great Chancellor" for more than a quarter of a century, including the period of the Franco-Prussian War.

Thiers, in the meanwhile, had made a tour of the courts of Europe in the hope of securing mediation by neutrals. He found plenty of sympathy, but no thought of help, and in November he took up direct negotiations with Bismarck.

At first there seemed a probability that an armistice of twenty-five days would be arranged, with the provision that Paris should be supplied with food during that time. Bismarck in the beginning raised no objections, but afterward refused to allow any food to be sent to the starving city, and this refusal on his part once more brought the negotiations to an end.

With a few scattered and half-armed armies being defeated in detail in the field, and the population of Paris being reduced to a diet of rats and being murdered by the German guns as they sought to dig potatoes from the frozen ground where they had been buried in the suburbs of the city, France held out until January 23, 1871, when Favre once more sought Bismarck.

That Other Meeting at Versailles

The meeting took place at Versailles, where, on January 18, in the Hall of Mirrors, King William of Prussia had been proclaimed German Emperor.

In the first meeting between Favre and Bismarck in September the German Chancellor had demanded the surrender of Strassburg, which was at that time still holding out.

"The King," Bismarck told Favre, "accepts an armistice under the conditions and with the object agreed upon between us. As I told you, we demand the occupation of all the fortresses besieged in the Vosges and the occupation of Strassburg, with the surrender of the garrison as prisoners of war."

Favre interrupted him. "I promised to report to my government all my conversation with your excellency," he said. "I do not know, however, that I shall have the courage to convey to them what you have just told me. The garrison of Strassburg have evoked the admiration of the world by their heroism. To surrender the garrison voluntarily as prisoners of war would be an act of cowardice which no man of spirit would advise."

"I am not of your opinion," Bismarck replied. "My reason is very simple. Strassburg is exhaustd. We have only to make a final assault to capture it. If we cannot come to an understanding the place will certainly be in our hands by Friday, and the garrison will be ours."

"Then," said Favre, "let us set that proposition aside and discuss others. What does your excellency mean by a guarantee on the part of Paris, of which you spoke yesterday?"

"Nothing more simple," answered the Chancellor. "A fort dominating the town."

The City as Well as a Fort

"It would be better," Favre rejoined, "to give you the whole city. That would be more to the point and simpler. How could you expect a French Assembly to deliberate under Prussian cannon? That is another proposition which I cannot undertake to report to my government."

Favre then suggested abandoning the idea of the neutralization of Paris. He said the Assembly could be called to Tours, where the government was already situated.

"I accept that," Bismarck replied, "and in that case it is agreed, according to what was said yesterday, that we shall facilitate with entire impartiality the electoral meetings and elections, even in the departments occupied, except in Alsace and in the part of Lorraine we hold."

"You admit, thereby," Favre said, "that if you consult the inhabitants, they will be unanimous in rejecting you."

"I know that perfectly," Bismarck answered. "We shall not please them, but we do not include them among the electors you will consult, since we intend to govern these districts absolutely."

These were the conditions the Government of National Defence refused to accept at the end of September. But three months later starvation had brought France to her knees, and after five days of negotiation between Bismarck and Favre an armistice was signed on January 28, with the declared object of permitting an election to be held in France to choose a National Assembly which should decide whether the war should be continued or on what conditions peace should be made.

The Conditions Germany Imposed

The conditions of the armistice were that the forts of Paris and all their material of war should be handed over to the German army; that the artillery defending Paris should be dismounted, and that the regular troops in Paris should as prisoners of war surrender their arms. The National Guard were permitted to retain their weapons and their artillery in order that they might police the city. Immediately on the fulfilment of the first two conditions all facilities were to be given for the entry of food supplies into Paris. On January 30 the Prussian flag waved over the French capital.

France Under the Heel

The terms of the armistice related only to Paris, but all the rest of France was under the German heel. The last French army in the field, after suffering irreparable defeat, had escaped across the Swiss frontier to avoid capture. All the strategic points in France were occupied by a German army of more than 500,000 men.

The treaty concluded a month later provided:

1. The cession by France of the greater part of Lorraine, including Metz and Thionville, and of Alsace, excepting Belfort.

2. France to pay an indemnity of $1,000,000,000, one-fifth in 1871 and the balance in instalments extending over three years.

3. The evacuation of French territory to begin on the ratification of the treaty, Paris and some western departments to be evacuated at that time, and the troops in the other departments to be gradually withdrawn as the indemnity was paid.

4. The German troops to be maintained at the cost of France and not to levy upon the departments occupied by them.

5. The inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine to be allowed to choose their nationality.

6. Prisoners of war to be immediately set at liberty.

7. Negotiations for a definitive treaty to be opened at Brussels after the ratification of this treaty.

8. The administration of the departments occupied by German troops to be intrusted to French officials under control of the chiefs of the German corps of occupation.

The treaty was negotiated on the part of France by Thiers and Favre. The elections for a new National Assembly that the armistice had provided for were held on February 8, and the assembly quickly met at Tours and voted for peace. Thiers and Favre went again to Versailles and met Bismarck on February 21.

With characteristic brutality the Chancellor whistled the "Hallali" and remarked to his staff, "This, gentlemen, is the death of the beast."

Favre wrote of the negotiations, which extended over five days: "We found him particularly excited on Saturday morning. His reception was constrained and almost supercilious. He showed himself more than impatient. He rebuked M. Thiers for returning to topics that had already been debated and settled. Nothing, however, was more justifiable on the part of M. Thiers. He had the right to defend the interests of his country and he discharged that duty in a manner to which the Chancellor had no ground for taking offence.

Bismarck as the Conqueror

"But M. de Bismarck would listen to nothing. His language was impetuous, almost passionate, and his tone was harsh. It was easy to see that he was under the influence of violent feelings hostile to our deliberations. I had no difficulty in understanding this, because I knew that the evening before he had received the news of the dispatch of Lord Granville. I was in no way surprised to hear him exclaim with a furious gesture:

"'I see quite well that you have no other idea than that of beginning the campaign again. You will have in that the support and advice of your good friends, the English.'"

This was in relation to the question of indemnity. Bismarck had at first insisted on $1,200,000,000. But the French delegates protested, and they were supported by England, Lord Granville sending a telegram of protest in the name of the British government to the British representative at Versailles. The indemnity was finally reduced to $1,000,000,000.

Favre continues:

"I stopped him and asked him what he meant. I combated for, perhaps, the twentieth time his pretended apprehensions. I added that if we found friends in Europe it was certainly to him that we owed them." This piece of sarcasm was probably lost on Bismarck.

Bismarck submitted certain conditions in connection with the payment of the indemnity and named the people to whom the carrying out of the scheme would be intrusted by Germany. Theirs objected to the conditions and wanted to consult Alphonse de Rothschild. The Chancellor consented, but he was greatly annoyed and became steadily more furious, interrupting almost every sentence uttered by the Frenchmen and declaring that he would not proceed further in the elaboration of a scheme that others were constantly trying to destroy. He strutted up and down the small room in which the negotiations were taking place and, getting more angry every minute, finally shouted:

"It is very good of me to take the trouble you have imposed on me. Our conditions are ultimatums. You must take them or leave them. I don't want to be mixed up any more with this affair. Bring an interpreter with you to-morrow. Henceforth I shall not speak French."

He had already told Favre at Ferrières that he spoke French there as a concession, but that when the final negotiations took place they would be conducted in "plain German." Now, after his declaration that he would no longer speak French he poured out his wrath on the French envoys in a stream of German.

A Banker to the Rescue

An agreement was finally reached with the help of Alphonse de Rothschild, and the treaty was to be ready for signature at 1 o'clock on Sunday, but when the French delegates reached Bismarck's office at the appointed hour they were kept waiting in an anteroom for three hours before the Chancellor received them. He then came beaming, and with much ostentation signed the treaty with a gold pen sent to him by some ladies for the purpose. Thiers and Favre added their signatures in silence, and three days later the triumphant German troops passed through the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile and marched down the Avenue des Champs Elysées.

According to the "Patrie" Thiers fought his hardest to save the capital from the crowning mortification of this pageant of the victorious enemy. The discussion on this point took ten times longer than the negotiations over any other proviso. But Bismarck was unyielding. His aim all through was to make France drink the cup of humiliation to the last bitter dregs.

The triumphal procession was headed by Lieutenant von Bernhardi, since become General von Bernhardi and the most notorious exponent of German barbarism. He had been ordered to ride ahead with a small detachment of Hussars to clear the way for the main body of troops. After passing through the Arc de Triomphe and riding down the Avenue des Champs Elysées and through the Champs Elysées he was confronted by the great crowd that had gathered in the Place de la Concorde and was packed so closely that there seemed no room for the small advance guard of the enemy.

Bernhardi commanded his men to dismount, to stand by their horses' heads, to sling the bridles over their arms and to have their carbines ready. With a loud voice he ordered the Frenchmen to stand back, at the same time showing the line they should hold. For a moment the crowd receded, but again pressed forward, and Bernhardi shouted:

"I shall shoot every person who sets foot on this open space."

Favre wrote:

"Reduced to submit to the will of the conqueror, we could not hope for any conditions except those dictated by his interest. From the day he drew the sword he had resolved, if we were beaten, to snatch two provinces from us. The conquest of part of our territory appeared to him to be the best homage that could be rendered. To the wishes of the populations he was incorporating in his empire, or to the views of the powers, which had so often called attention to the necessity of preserving European equilibrium, he showed the most supreme contempt."

Shade of Bismarck: "Alack-a-day and woe is me
That I such change should come to see!"
—From *Campana de Gracia*, Barcelona

One of the Ironic Dramas of History in This Abrupt Turn in Germany's Fortunes